United Nations E/CN.5/2002/5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
12 February 2002

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Fortieth session
11-21 February 2002
Agenda item 3 (b)*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups

Letter dated 11 February 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith China's position paper on ageing (see annex).**

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fortieth session of the Commission for Social Development under agenda item 3 (b).

(*Signed*) **Wang** Yingfan
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* E/CN.5/2002/1.

** To be made available also to the Commission for Social Development acting as the preparatory committee for the Second World Assembly on Ageing at its second session.

02-25082 (E) 130202

Annex

[Original: Chinese and English]

China's position paper on ageing

1. As we enter the twenty-first century, most countries, including developing countries, will step into an era characterized by ageing of the population. Ageing of the population is an inevitable phenomenon of the development of humankind as well as a symbol of social progress.

2. It is of great significance that the first World Assembly on Ageing, which was held in 1982, adopted the International Strategy of Action on Ageing, declared 1999 the International Year of Older Persons and decided to convene the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002. This demonstrates that the issue of ageing is drawing more and more attention from the international community.

3. The ageing of the population will pose a great global challenge. The international community should pay great attention to the consequences of this process and deal properly with new problems arising from global socio-economic development.

4. Appropriate evaluation should be given to the elderly, who are not only participants of social development, but also beneficiaries of social welfare. While they benefit from society, they also contribute to families and communities.

5. Societies with ageing populations still have vitality and the elderly can still bring their potential into play. The elderly should be encouraged to participate in social development activities in various ways and to make contributions within their means so they can have happy and meaningful lives.

6. The elderly comprise a vulnerable group whose rights and interests should be protected by legal means in a concrete manner. It is necessary to formulate comprehensive social security laws and regulations and to establish a social legal system protecting people of all ages.

7. While formulating employment, medical care, transportation and social security policies, States should take the characteristics and special needs of the elderly into full consideration and should integrate the issue of ageing into overall national social and economic programmes.

8. Efforts should be made to ensure that the level of income and social welfare enjoyed by the elderly is in conformity with the level of socio-economic development. The principle of equality, while giving priority to efficiency, should be abided by so as to make sure that the re-employment of the elderly is consistent with the employment of working-age people.

9. Equal attention should be paid to meeting the demands of the elderly for both a material and a spiritual life so that they would be properly supported, enjoy medical care, engage in life-long learning and lead contributive and happy lives.

10. Importance should be attached to establishing a sound community environment for the ageing populations and to improving the community service network for the elderly. Family plays a pivotal role in providing support and care to the elderly. Efforts should be made to achieve the objective of generations of the family living in great harmony and common prosperity.

11. Development and ageing of the population are the two main challenges confronted by developing countries. Poverty and disease are the primary concern of the elderly people in these countries. Efforts shall be made to promote economic and social progress and to adopt poverty eradication and the improvement of medical care and social security, which are of utmost importance to developing countries, as priority targets.

12. International cooperation should be conducted in the field of ageing based on the principle of "learning from each other, equality and mutual benefit". Developed countries should take into consideration the low level of economic development and incomplete social security systems in developing countries and should adopt practical measures to assist them in solving the problems presented by ageing populations in a proper and satisfactory way.